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State Patterns in Wisconsin for Improving Reading Instruction Through the Certification of Reading Teachers, Specialists, and Supervisors.

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Wisconsin's 1968 certification proposal for reading teachers, specialists, and supervisors is described in detail. A three-step sequence of advanced course work and direct experience in the field are proposed to prepare qualified personnel for the state schools. The proposal includes (1) recommendations for changing and improving the present requirements for the certification of remedial reading teachers, (2) special certification requirements for new teachers (a three-credit-hour course in reading is required), (3) requirements for certification as a reading teacher III--a full-time reading teacher (3 years' teaching experience and an M.A. or its equivalent in advanced courses are required), (4) requirements for certification as a reading specialist II--a reading consultant or diagnostician (the same preparation as reading teacher III plus a sixth year of specified graduate study are required), and (5) requirements for certification as a supervisory reading specialist I--supervisor (the same preparation as a reading specialist II plus a seventh year leading to a Ph.D. or its equivalent are required). This proposal is in accord with the recommendations of the International Reading Association's (IRA) Professional Standards Committee and, if accepted, will place Wisconsin's certification at a higher level than the IRA requirements. (BS)

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STATE PATTERNS IN WISCONSIN FOR IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE CERTIFICATION OF READING TEACHERS, SPECIALISTS, AND SUPERVISORS

International Reading Association

Sessions Meeting 8A

"The State's Role in Improving Reading Instruction"

Thursday, April 25, 1968

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INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin was one of the first states in which the State Department of Public Instruction set up standards for the certification of remedial reading teachers. About twelve years ago the Certification Regulations were adopted which made it necessary for a teacher to gain experience and additional course work in reading in order to obtain a Remedial Reading License.

Although the license was not required by the state in order for a school system to employ someone for remedial reading work, many of the administrators of the larger systems required that this special preparation and license be obtained by a teacher before he could be employed in a remedial reading position. In times of large demand, teachers were permitted, in some places, to complete the required work during their employment.

The requirements during these past years have been minimal, but they have made it possible for schools of education to provide course work and clinic practice to more people than would have taken the work voluntarily. Consequently, special programs for the preparation of reading teachers are now available at the graduate level in the two Universities at Madison and Milwaukee, at Marquette University in Milwaukee, at eight of the nine State Universities, and at about six of the eighteen private colleges in the state. However, not all of the colleges offer graduate work.

THE PRESENT REQUIREMENTS

The Certification Requirements for a remedial reading license as they are outlined by the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction in its Certification Standards are:

> *f. Remedial Reading. A Wisconsin teacher's license based upon a degree is required. In addition 12 special semester credits must be obtained. Courses in remedial reading and in a remedial reading clinic are required. The remaining credits may be chosen from adolescent literature, children's literature, techniques of improving developmental reading, and techniques of teaching the mentally handicapped. Three years of teaching experience are a prerequisite to obtaining this license.*

THE SEARCH FOR IMPROVED REQUIREMENTS

At the spring meeting of 1965, the Executive Board of the Wisconsin State Reading Association appointed three members to an ad hoc Certification Committee ". . . to study the certification requirements for a reading teacher in Wisconsin and to develop a proposed program of improved requirements." Dr. Theodore Harris of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Dr. Norman Frenzel of the Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh, and a Chairman, Dr. Arthur Schoeller of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, were appointed to this committee. In the fall of 1967, Dr. Thomas Barrett of the Madison Campus replaced Dr. Harris when the latter moved to Washington.

A close liaison with the I.R.A. Professional Standards and Ethics Committee was established through Dr. Dorothy Dietrich, the co-chairman of the International committee. At the request of the Wisconsin committee, Dr. Harris was a consultant to the larger committee at their November, 1967 meeting. As a result, adjustments were made in both certification proposals so that at the present time the I.R.A. proposal and the Wisconsin proposal are very similar. It is hoped that this will strengthen both proposals.

The Wisconsin committee also surveyed the offerings in and opinions about reading courses being offered in the institutions of higher learning in Wisconsin. Teachers of special reading programs were questioned about the procedures and regulations that were needed to establish and operate a remedial reading center to diagnose and treat children with measurable reading disability. These findings were added to information obtained from the sixteen other states which required additional work for granting a special reading license.

The final proposal was completed and presented to the membership meeting of the Wisconsin State Reading Association on April 15, 1967 at which the proposal was accepted in principle, On November 2, 1967 the revised proposal was accepted by the state association and turned over to Dr. Schoeller's Certification Study Committee for final refinements and for the presentation of the proposal to the State Department of Public Instruction.

The final report was presented to the Wisconsin Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission on March 29, 1968. Further discussion will take place in August, 1968. If approved by the T.E.P.S. Commission, the proposal will be presented at a public hearing of concerned parents and citizens. The recommendations of these two groups will be given to Mr. William Kahl, the State Superintendent, who can decide the ultimate adoption, revision, or denial of this proposal.

THE NEW CERTIFICATION PROPOSAL FOR READING TEACHERS, SPECIALISTS, AND SUPERVISORS

A special feature of the proposal is the recommendation that graduates of all teacher education curricula be required to complete a three credit course in reading or its equivalent in order to be certified for teaching.

Another interesting aspect of the proposal is the omission of the word "remedial" from any part of the recommendations. The committee's proposal reflects the opinion of many teachers in the state that the connotation of "remedial" is detrimental to a school program and should not be used.

The proposal for improved certification of reading teachers sets up a three step sequence of advanced course work and direct experience in the field to prepare reading teachers, specialists working as consultants with teachers or as diagnostic specialists, and, finally, full-fledged reading supervisors.

The recommended certification requirements follow:

I. Recommendation for Changing and Improving the Present Requirements for the Certification of Remedial Reading Teachers.

A. The present regulations for the certification of a remedial reading teacher should be rescinded.

B. The following three step design for the certification of reading teachers, specialists as consultants or clinicians, and supervisors should be adopted and required of persons who wish to be certified for any or all of the positions mentioned above.

II. Special Certification Requirements for the Certification of New Teachers

A. Each person requesting certification as an elementary, middle school, junior high, secondary, or exceptional teacher must have a three credit course or its equivalent in developmental reading in order to be approved. Some practicum work in reading must also be included in the program.

B. Other reading and language arts courses should be available in teacher education curricula for the necessary preparation of teachers of reading in middle schools and in junior and senior high schools.

III. Certification as a Reading Teacher III

Certification as a Reading Teacher III would permit a teacher to serve as a full time teacher of reading disablity cases or as a full time teacher of corrective or developmental reading with the

ability to identify and recognize reading problem cases and to plan appropriate programs for the prevention and/or the correction of these problems.

A certified teacher with three years of teaching experience may be certified as a Reading Teacher III upon the satisfactory completion of a Master's degree or its equivalent in advanced courses.

A. Required:

1. Developmental reading--elementary
2. Developmental reading--secondary
3. Diagnosis and treatment of reading disability
4. Reading Clinic practice
5. Seminar in reading

B. The remaining requirements to be selected from:

1. Other reading courses and seminars
2. Children's and adolescent literature
3. Learning and human development
4. Visual-motor-perceptual problems
5. Measurement
6. Language arts
7. Curriculum, history, and philosophy of education
8. Exceptional children
9. Guidance and counseling

IV. Certification of a Reading Specialist II who would serve as a Reading Consultant or Diagnostician depending on the area of concentration selected

A. Developmental Reading Specialist II (Consultant)

A Developmental Reading Consultant II should be able to work with classroom teachers and reading teachers in surveying the on-going program and making suggested changes to help carry out the district reading program.

The same preparation as the Reading Teacher III would be required with the addition of a sixth year program of graduate work including:

1. An advanced course or courses in developmental reading or the psychology of reading
2. Advanced course in the diagnosis and remediation of reading and/or learning problems
3. Curriculum development
4. Supervision
5. Semantics or linguistics
6. Internship with a qualified reading consultant or supervisor at various age levels in a school setting

B. Diagnostic Reading Specialist II (Reading Clinician)

A Diagnostic Reading Clinician II would serve in a diagnostic center or clinic and should be able to provide expert diagnosis and programs of remediation for the more complex and severe reading disability cases. This teacher should also be able to assist Reading Teachers III who are working with corrective and disability cases.

The same preparation as the Reading Teacher III would be required with the addition of a sixth year program of graduate work including:

1. An advanced course or courses in the diagnosis and remediation of reading and/or learning problems
2. Advanced course in developmental reading or psychology of reading
3. Individual testing
4. Clinic practice in individual testing
5. Semantics or linguistics
6. Internship with a qualified reading clinician dealing with various age levels in a clinic setting

V. Certification of a Supervisory Reading Specialist I (Supervisor)

A Reading Supervisor I should be able to develop with the staff a system-wide reading philosophy and curriculum based on the varying needs and competencies of individual pupils and teachers as well as to participate in personnel and staff evaluations, budget recommendations, and policy determinations in cooperation with parents, teachers, other supervisors, and administrators.

The Reading Supervisor I would complete the requirements for both the Reading Consultant II and the Reading Clinician II in a seventh year program leading to a Doctor's degree or its equivalent.

A. Courses required from at least two of the following:
    1. Administration and supervision
    2. Advanced research and statistics
    3. Public relations
    4. Instructional media

B. The applicant should also provide evidence of leadership ability in previous reading positions. This evidence should include written recommendations from previous employers.

NOTE: A person who does not have three years of classroom experience may be provided with provisional certification for the teaching of reading dependent on his other qualifications, recommendations, and related experiences.

CONCLUSION

At the present time there is little or no indication as to whether the State Department will accept or reject this proposal. It is hoped that this proposal or a better one will be adopted for use in Wisconsin before the end of 1968 as one measure that can help to improve reading instruction.

The need to improve the certification requirements for teachers of reading is evident in the rapid growth of employment of reading teachers spurred on especially by federal support through Elementary and Secondary Education Act projects since 1965. There are few qualified teachers available to fill these positions, and, consequently, many unqualified persons have been accepted thus lowering the status of reading teachers in particular as well as teachers in general. The difficulty of teaching reading adequately to all of today's children--disadvantaged, disabled, and impaired--makes it imperative that teachers with special preparation in reading be employed at several levels of competence in at least most school systems.

These recommendations are in accord with those of the I.R.A. Professional Standards Committee, although they differ in some of the details. Adopting these recommendations for the state would place Wisconsin's certification at a much higher level than that of most states and somewhat higher than the I.R.A. requirements. The Wisconsin reading teachers believe that this is important if Wisconsin children are to receive the improved instruction and guidance in reading which they deserve. Therefore, the Wisconsin State Reading Association members and many others are very hopeful that these new requirements will be adopted by the state of Wisconsin and other states so that the reading and other related learning skills of today's and tomorrow's pupils will be benefited by the improvement of the teachers, specialists, and supervisors in the field of reading.